THE DREAM OF LOVE

A Mystery

HENRY ABBEY

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BY

HENRY ABBEY
(1842-1911)

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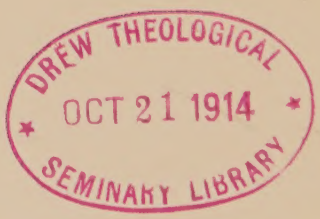

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THE DREAM OF LOVE

A MYSTERY

DEDICATORY

SEA AND SOUL

Your eyes are dreams of sea and soul,
For sea and soul are like and kin.
Abroad the sea's strong billows roll;
The soul's, unseen, surge up within.

Tho' wide and vast, from pole to pole,
Old Ocean gleams, to me he seems
Of smaller compass than the soul.
Your eyes are dreams.

I meet your glance and I behold
The blue sea reaching to the sky;
And Aphrodité, in the gold
Of her blown hair, is wafted by.
Your eyes are dreams.

THE CIRCUMSTANCES

Their golden rye-fields dimpled by the breeze,
Two thrifty farms lie smiling in the sun,
And join each other, as I fondly trust
Two hearts will join who from their bounty live.
One farm is Jean la Mont's and one is mine,
And she, the one great pearl of all the world,
Is his dear, only offspring, lovely Grace.

Three years ago my father followed her
Who gave me birth, and fell on lifeless sleep.
At college when the sudden summons came,
I sank beneath the waters of my grief,
The deluge of my world, and all my heart
Cried out in agony against its loss —
The guiding hand, the patient tenderness,
That long had borne with me and never tired.
But tears have in themselves the cure of grief,
And medicine the wounds from which they spring.

Tho' overwhelmed at first, I rose again,
As youth is wont, when life and hope are sweet,
And floated on what seemed a shoreless sea.
An ark of consolation soon there was,
Which gave relief and shelter from the flood.
With baffled hopes of life professional,
I came back to the farm and to my home,
And to my heart's home, gentle Grace la Mont.
She was the dove that, on the flood of grief,
Brought to my window there, love's olive spray.
See how my thought runs faster than events,
And puts possession where pursuit should be!

From college to the farmhouse, where I live,
They brought to me my printed intimates,
Most modest, unassuming, pleasant folk,
That are not cross or sullen when put off,
Yet make me always loser when they are;
Brought fragile instruments of chemistry;
Brought cabinets of minerals and rocks,
Selected specimens not often found,
And some more common: limestone encrinites,

Fossil asterias, wood petrified,
And one, a true Jurassic, bearing marks
Of that huge feathered reptile, or tooth'd bird,
Called archeopteryx, or "ancient-winged."
Besides, they brought my diamond microscope,
Which magnifies the usual fly's foot so
That it is larger than a beechen spray;
But size, we know, is simply relative.
Beneath this microscope abound strange sights
Of living things in water and in air,
Far, far beyond the range of naked eyes,
Beyond the range of other microscopes —
Fantastic, gruesome things, that squirm about
And have their purposes of good, or ill.

Over my fields I wander frequently,
And in the woods, or wheresoever peers
The dead past's upturned face of shelving rocks.
I carry Thor, my hammer, and make search
For local specimens to fill my home.
I often find that my returning steps
Are led, almost without a guiding thought,

To the stone farmhouse of the other farm,
Where Grace la Mont makes summer all the year.

¶ After my father's funeral, when first
I shook her hand, as any stranger might,
And saw before me, not the little girl
Whom I had known and played with as a child,
But a young woman, graceful and most fair,
Some seeing spirit whispered me within,
"Twining together, like two silken cords,
Shall be your lives, each other strengthening."
And then a dull misgiving, unexplained,
Settled with chilly dampness on my heart.

My lady's manner was exceeding cold,
Almost unfriendly in its shy reserve,
And I, big oaf, adversely blurted out,
In some connection that I now forget,
That not for womankind, or for their looks,
I cared one Greek iota's little dot.
Perhaps we, neither of us, ever dreamed
That, from the glacier of indifference,

Might lightly leap, at first a slender rill,
To broaden onward through congenial lands,
The Rhine of Love, with castles on its banks
And goodly cities filled with happy news.

¶ My Grace for grace, in Grace was not misnamed,
Since, for the undeserving, always she
Does favors gladly, and her movements seem
The faultless rhythm of a living rhyme.
Her figure, not too small, or slender-slight,
Is marked by those alluring curves and lines,
Which an impassioned sculptor might express.
Her features all are sensitive and fine:
About the oval of her azure eyes
There is a look so pure it makes me think
Of the Madonna, lilies, and white clouds.
Set under meditative crescent brows,
The long-fringed modesty of drooping lids
Shames the pink petals of the velvet rose.
Her lips are that intensely crimson hue
Of cherry, red-rose, and wild columbine.

A golden, silken sunshine is her hair,
Which falls below her waist, and is a prize
That some bold lover, braver far than I,
Might dare to mesh his hands in, or to kiss.

Oh! she is like the sweet, surprising joy
Of delicate aroma wafted out
From unseen blossoms, when the full moon spreads
Its silver glamour and enchants the night;
Is like the iridescent sunrise tints
Seen in the deep pellucid of a lake;
Is like the hermit thrush's rapturous song
Heard in the gloaming when all else is still!

¶ Destruction and Renewal, hand in hand,
Walk the whole earth and execute their law.
Their steps go down into the deepest seas,
Where no light penetrates to sunken ships,
And where the ponderous waters are at rest;
And on the highest mountain-tops, or where
Perpetual Winter never doffs his robes,
They make their way and leave their vestiges.

Destruction wears a brown, autumnal cloak,
And is the skeleton that men call Death.

Renewal is a gay, light-hearted girl,
Fond of the buds and blossoms and of youth.
Some call her Life and others call her Spring.
She now is here, and even at our doors,
And I will call her May: her gown is green,
And flower'd with merry dandelions, trails
Along the ground and sparkles in the morn.

I had not thought of her companion drear,
Until I heard the news, flashed through the deep,
That on its way to us across the sea,
There is the monstrous Afrit of a Plague.
The presses blare its ominous approach,
And wealth and poverty alike forbode.
There is no cheek that does not blanch for it.
There is no foot it may not overtake.
This pestilence, in distant Asia born,
May leave more vacant chairs about our hearths
Than that red havoc of internal war,

Of which, four years ago, we had an end.
It is the child of Filth, and where the poor,
Huddled together in their narrow rooms,
Breathe and re-breathe the vitiated air,
There it must come to sicken and destroy.

As all the forms of life, inanimate,
Or animate, begin in seeds and eggs,
So all infection does, originates
In the miasma, or malaria,
And gases other, that of filth come forth.
These breed like flies, or bear a seed like grain.
The unseen product, scattered by the wind,
Is breathed by human beings near and far,
And planted in the body, the disease,
If nothing counteract it, ripens, grows,
Till it has driven out the victim's life.
The yellow fever is a noxious seed,
A deadly vegetable, killed by frost;
But cholera is animal, and lives
Throughout the darkened months of Russian cold.

I pray that, if this visitant of death
Must land upon our shores and spread its work,
It will not come to us, sequestered here
Among the hills, where squalor may not bide.
I trust the scare will be a deal of use,
And bar the progress of its dreadful cause,
By having taken freely from its pack,
The peddled ounces of prevention there.

¶ I wonder whether Grace cares aught for me?
We walked one day together down the road,
The land all sunshine 'neath a cloudless sky,
Our hearts as happy as two singing birds,
And as we went, I picked a wayside rose.
Petal by petal, pulling it apart,
I said, "She loves me," or, "She loves me not."
Grace laughed: "What does the final petal say?"
I answered, "Loves me not." She laughed again
And cried, "O fie! for such a rose as that!"
"And is it false, and *do* you love me, dear?"
She danced away and picked another rose,
And as she gave it me, I heard her say,

"That is a secret," and I saw her tears.
So, had I been Harpocrates himself,
And straight from Cupid's hand received the rose,
I had not been to silence more enjoined.

¶ Down by the brook, which separates the farms,
Is a great rock that leans above the stream,
A far-brought bowlder of a melted Age,
And has to me the appearance, in a way,
Of some gigantic animal extinct,
Tinoceras, or megathérium,
Which, coming to the water's edge to drink,
Sank partly in the soil and turned to stone.

I lay upon its back one faithful day,
Uplooking at the sky between the boughs,
Spread out, like hands of blessing, over me,
And thought of Grace la Mont and of her love: —
Why she appeared at times to smother it —
Whether her father would not have her wed,
Not liking me and loth to part with her.
And as I mused, I had a dream indeed,

A mystic vision, where I saw and heard,
And spoke and acted as I would again.
The whole of it my memory photographed
Upon her walls minutely; it would seem
A forecast of events to happen soon.
The future's face, forever turned away,
Was wondrously reverted, and its look
Had in it a premonitory frown.

They took, of "the immortal Shakespeare"'s face,
A cast in plaster, after he was dead—
The broad, discoursive, Chimborazan brow,
The somewhat aquiline, world-leader nose,
The clipped, red mustache and the goateed chin,
All in the ambient death-mask well detailed.
So I, of my dead dream, the future's face,
Will make a cast, and have each feature set
In the spelt plaster of familiar words.

Since I arrived at manhood, I have prayed
That I might have God's guidance in my life.

I think such guidance more than wisdom is;
And it may be that this strange dream of mine,
Which wisdom never could have given me,
Is sent to be a warning and a guide.

The vision seemed reality itself;
And as I know the persons it concerns,
I can not think it all impossible,
Nor yet improbable, so sketch it here,
That when the time of it has passed away,
I may compare it with the very facts.

I should have fought the urgent impulse more,
To set the vision forth in black and white,
And trusted rather to my memory,
Had I not seen that selfish face to-day,
A face that I before had never seen,
Except in that clear vision, on the rock
That leans above the brook as if athirst.

The soldier, when he goes to meet the foe,
May see the shadow of impending death,

But marches bravely on, let come what may.
I too behold a shadow in my path;
I too go on, nor waver in the least;
Nor could I otherwise, it seems to me.
For what am I, with all my hopes and fears,
Or what is any man, with all of his,
More than a real shadow that must move,
Behind the inexorable gnomon, round
A graduated, solitary disk?

THE VISION

Across the turbulent Atlantic waste,
And where the Tuscan Apennines look down
Upon the fitful Arno, ere it parts
That dream in stone, that shrine of deathless art,
Where Danté lived and Michael Angelo,
I see a youthful wife upon her knees,
Her supplicating tender hands outstretched,
Or raised at times to ward off cruel blows
Dealt by the anger of a trifling cause.
For, in the cauldron of the husband's mind,
That cause had seethed to fuming violence,
Which, being unreason, like insanity
Could not be reasoned with, or checked with tears.
I see that soon the husband leaves the wife,
Taking her jewels and her slender purse,
And in a ship departs for other shores.

His is the face that I have seen to-day —
A handsome face, whatever be its faults:

Thin, firm, sad lips and wandering dark eyes;
A bearded chin, and snowy, even teeth;
Large-nostril'd nose, scarce noticeably bent,
As if his innate subtlety had tweaked
To its own indirection, slightly so,
That not too prominent feature of his face;
Black curly hair and long, that lightly sweeps
Shoulders by vanity or study stooped;
Withal, an intellectual high brow,
Not broad enough to hold a noble soul.

¶ I see the welcome farmhouse where Grace lives.
The afternoon is clear, the land attired
Right royally in its green plenitude,
And birds are singing in the feathery elms.
Now Grace comes out and saunters toward the brook,
Where the trout glance in deep, enamour'd pools,
And water-cresses build their pungent wharves
For moths and butterflies to land upon.

Athwart a rug of moss, I see reclined
The man that I beheld in Italy,

And had no sense of being borne away,
Or voyaging on water or in air.
If sight be thus projected in our dreams,
To me it shows that, when the soul is free,
And in the visual purple needs no change,
It will surpass the bounds of time and space,
And look "before and after," then indeed.

With slender hands Grace parts the shrubbery;
But starting back, and almost terrified
To find this well-dressed stranger in the dell,
Is half attracted by his cultured mien,
And half repelled by some instinctive fear;
For, seeing her, he rises, bowing low,
And begs in English phrase, for speech of her: —
He has not seen before, in all his life,
A maiden so divinely beautiful.
He craves to touch a finger of her hand,
To judge if she be of this one-mooned earth,
Or some flight-wearied angel resting here.
If angel, he will henceforth always strive,
With solemn fastings and repeated prayers,

To gain the blissful city where she dwells,
If only to be near her evermore;
But if she be of earth, he will aspire
To the great honor of her lovely hand.

Then Jean la Mont, who has been tilling, near,
The fertile furrows for his empty barns,
Makes Grace acquainted with this half *savant*,
Who has, I think, some dæmon at his beck,
Socratic, or more likely, otherwise,
Since that of Socrates could only warn.
The stranger, I perceive, la Mont had met
Upon the day before, and liked him well,
And listened to the story of his life —
A pleasing fiction, very much adorned
With titled names and lively episodes.
I see Grace smile in answer to his smiles.
He makes her ears his cells for honeyed words;
But still she seems to doubt him and to fear.

¶ Now as the sun, before his chamber door,
Stands, or appears to stand, ere he retires,

His glory trailing, like a splendid robe,
Behind him down the stairway of the hills,
I see them parting at the farmhouse door,
The wide, quaint, battened door, whose upper half
Is open, and unveils the hall within.
And as the stranger passes down the path,
His kiss still consciously upon her hand,
Grace, entering the house, turns, and leans out
Over the lower door, and watches him
Until he vanishes around the hill
Where runs the road that to the village goes.

I see her saintly face, a trouble sweet
Indwelling softly on it, heightening
Its pensive beauty, as a little cloud
Intensifies the calm of summer skies.
I know not whether now her thoughts go back
To me, or something I have said or done.
And have I won her love, or have I not?
I thought I had; the moment gives me doubt.

In my walled garden of affection, she,
The soulful flower, the one supreme event,

Can never fade or wither, tho' I die;
For I shall carry with me out of time,
This glowing picture of her loveliness,
As now I see her bathed in sunset light,
And leaning slightly from the low half-door.

So may have looked the "blessèd damosel,"
Outleaning over heaven's bright gold bar,
Longing for her true lover left on earth,
And watching for his coming, down the void.

¶ I see them riding in the village street,
Grace and that specious stranger from abroad;
He on a horse as black and strong as iron,
She on her all-white pony, quite at ease.
The pony's mane drifts back upon his breast,
His tail is thick and almost sweeps the ground.
I like the pony; he is fond of Grace,
And always proud to have her on his back.
He is caparisoned if she be there.
Her long, green riding-habit, full in skirt,
The snowy ostrich-feather in her hat,

And that large lily, pinned upon her breast,
Are all in keeping and become her well.
Slack reins in hand, the horses side by side,
I see these loitering riders passing by.

¶ I see at night a city with its lights
That mark the serried buildings where they stand,
Rank upon rank, in orderly array,
A giant army halted by a stream.
Seen in the doubtful dark, the towers and spires
Look like so many standards, now close furled.
Down in the stream the tide sets in and out,
And gets its share of the unfortunate.
In the sharp battle for existence here,
This citied host of buildings wins its way.
But all the towns are more or less alike,
And no description ever can create
The same impression that its subject does.

I see the stranger walking in a street
That leads down to the river and a wharf.
Beneath a corner light's revealing glare,

His foreign face is unmistakable.
I see it as I would if he were here.
I see him entering a peak-roofed house,
And now is seated at a desk and writes.
When he has done, I can not choose but read:

"The time is come; to-night I end my life.
The river says, 'Embrace, I offer rest.'
The world and I have grappled in fair fight,
And I am beaten. Having met defeat,
I will go down into its lowest depths,
Where all is silence and forgetfulness.
I only ask that he who finds these words,
Will send them to my wife across the sea.
To-night I cross a wider; so, farewell. —
Michael Ghianni."

Thus he signed his name!

And afterward he writes, above his lines
And at the page's top, his wife's address.
I note it well, and write it in my soul.
He leaves the paper open on the desk,
And quite self-satisfied, goes from the house;

But not to end his life. Oh, no, not that!
He fancies that his life has just begun!
The sunshine of his coming days is Grace.
He sees the large old farmhouse where she dwells,
And hopes to pass therein most happy years,
Living in vested plenty till he dies.
But what is that he mutters to himself?
"I shall have leisure to pursue," he says,
"My studies in bacteriology!"

Such schemes as this have been devised before,
And have worked out indifferently well;
But usually, in the fine-spun cloth
Made on the clever looms of villainy,
There is some thread left loose in warp or woof,
Which will, if handled wisely and with care,
Undo and ravel all the fabric out.

Michael Ghianni? That is not the name
He gave to Jean la Mont, or called himself,
But is the name that I shall know him by.
His studies in bacteriology!

Why, when I was in college, the last year,
I won no little glory for the way
In which I managed my experiments,
And for the strange discoveries I reached
In the domain of the invisible.

To do the one thing never done before,
Looks always easy, after it is done,
And many think they could have done as well,
Or better, if they first had thought of it;
But the acute doer smiles at this, and knows
The badge of worth is strong simplicity,
And that what is not simple is not great.

"The love of glory," so it has been said,
"Makes heroes; the contempt of it, great men."
And while I do not care enough for it
To shoot and to be shot at legally,
I have respect and not the least contempt
For what small portion may have come my way.
I know indeed, it is not really mine,
And so I do not take it to myself,

And would not, if I could, because all praise,
Honor, and glory unto God belong.

"No man can know the future," so they cry,
And that is ordinary platitude.
So much is said that goes beyond the truth,
And platitude is prone to do just that.
And yet, the future is so rarely read,
It seems a long, inevitable scroll,
Unrolling to the ticking of the clock;
And nothing on the scroll is ever seen,
Until its very moment has arrived,
Which shatters at the contact, and becomes
An instance of the past, no more to be.

If premonitions had not long been known,
And by coincidences verified,
The word itself had never been in use.

The ancient prophets had revealed to them
A knowledge of the things that were to come.
What was to be was pictured in their dreams,

Or in a vision like a waking dream;
And my foreknowledge, gained upon the rock,
Was like a series of pictures, each to each
Succeeding, and in sequence regular.

Out of their dungeon-halls of memory,
Through which I do not often make my way,
I bring to light these prisoners presaged,
And bind them here with chains of clanking words,
Which, if in right perspective read and seen,
And they enchain attention to the end,
Will show the truthful outlines of a Face.

¶ Under a rustic arbor thick with leaves,
Near the red farmhouse that is Grace's home,
I see two persons seated in the dark,
In converse joined, and in each other's arms.
The world may all go on without them now;
Sufficient is their present happiness.
Their troth is plighted and the pact is sealed.
The bats of doubt and fear have flown away,

And left them there with love, beneath the stars
And low half-moon, whose silver wand, like love,
Makes fond illusion of reality.
My Grace and I are seated in the bower.
Against my burly shoulder and broad breast,
Is laid that virgin gold without alloy,
Her happy crown of lovable gold hair.

The cunning weavers of Arabia,
Who fain would shuttle sunshine in their silks
And make it stay there, shining after dark,
Might dearly pay to get such hair as this,
With soft enchantment in each thread of it.
With this they easily could weave a web
As sibylline, and, kept and doted on,
As amiable a warden of true love,
As Desdemona's jealous handkerchief.

His father was a bandit on the hills,
And to the son had given advantages
Of books and teachers, which had been like seed
Sown on a narrow patch of fertile ground.

The unlearn'd feels his lack, and has respect
For knowledge,—far more, often, than the learn'd.
The son was quick and naturally bold,
But not so true but that he would, at times,
Pervert the sense of honor to a cloak
For Máfian, or Black Hand villainies.

What men excuse and tolerate a while,
It matters not how foul the wrong may be,
They may adopt, and come to cherish it.
And now the son has taken on himself
The miserable oath of membership
In that confederate, underhand device
For bold extortion and worse outlawry.
It was in part his mission to the town,
To meet with other members of his band,
And be in touch with them, if he have need.

I hear a step, and dimly in the road,
Discern a figure passing to and fro,
Or pausing, undecided what to do.
Now he comes near, and striding up the path,

Enters the arbor and discovers us.
He must have heard our voices where he stood.
It is Ghianni, and I feel his rage,
Tho' in the dark I see no sign of it.
A mighty hatred gathers in his heart.
I feel it as I sometimes see at night
The lightning, that forebodes a coming storm,
Leap from behind the low horizon line,
Its sharp stiletto gleaming in the dark.

Ghianni quells his wrath impolitic,
And with profuse excuses, hard to make,
Bows low affectedly and turns away.
I smile with scorn and follow with my gaze,
Out to the road, this walking deviltry;
While Grace, in confidence that sweetly grows,
Whispers with lips that slightly touch my ear,
"Him I have never, never even liked.
Father, you know, was pleased with him at first;
But now he doubts him and avoids him too.
You he admires; but quaintly says he thinks
That ologies and farming do not mix."

At this she chuckled with a little shrug,
And added, with her arm around my neck,
"But *I* love you and shall until I die."

Since fond good-nights are best in kisses said,
Soon at her door I kiss my Grace good-night,
And homeward take my way, as if my star
Were "in the ascendant," and the earth were mine.

¶ I see the parlor that my Grace adorns
With flowers and with her presence, beautiful
Above the fragrant presence of the rose —
More beautiful to me than all the blooms
That ever made delight accessible.

Grace sits at her piano: plaintively
The white or black keys to her touch respond
In chordal harmony, the while she sings
A song of twilight and the evening star.

There, as the shadows gather slowly round,
Ghianni comes and stays a moody hour;
She, ice to his approaches; he, despair.

Before he goes, he places in her hand
A ripe, large orange, grown in Sicily,
And begs her to accept it for his sake,
And when she eats it, then to think of him.
She answers not, nor thanks him with a smile;
But from the dim room bows him absently,
As if indeed her thoughts were other where;
Then turns and puts the golden globe of fruit
Upon the sheets of printed music, piled
Upon the rich-toned, glossy instrument.
She seats herself, and up and down the keys,
Her white, accustomed fingers nimbly runs,
Evoking melody, and sings to it
My words, the tinkling murmur of the brook,
The sigh-like waft of yearning, which I felt
In the recesses where my spirit dwells,
And which I gave a body light of foot,
And with the love of music in its veins.
How sweetly Grace can sing a simple song!

I would that you were present;
I long it all the day;

For not an hour is pleasant
In which you are away.

If absence be like fuel
Upon a lover's flame,
I know that it is cruel
And seems a burning shame.

Come soon to me, my dearest;
For absence, if too long,
May weaken love sincerest,
And be a bitter wrong.

My soul to yours is calling!
For when you are not near,
Upon my true heart falling,
Each moment is a tear.

Now, while the song is warbling its last word,
Into the room I seem to come myself,
And clasp strong arms around my darling Grace.
She lays Ghianni's orange in my hand,
And says that I must have it; she would not;

Nor would have taken it, except that she,
To cross him with refusal, did not care.
"Surely," I say, "this stranger has odd taste,
To bring to you one orange, only one.
Perhaps there is more in it than we know."

¶ I seem to have this orange in my house,
And in the light of morning turn it round.
I find no flaw in it on any side —
A goodly orange, with a firm, thin coat
Of that deep reddish yellow, like fine gold.

One easily might fancy that the tree,
Whereon it grew, had wrapped its searching roots
About a chest of treasure buried long,
And, penetrating to the coin within,
Had drawn upon the humbled, haughty wealth,
And thus enriched the flavored succulence
That orbed itself among the dusky leaves.

Again I slowly turn the orange round,
And look more closely through a handy lens.

Ah, see! the slightest puncture in the rind!
A sure incision made by some sharp steel!
Save at this place, I now take off the rind,
And spilling not one drop of yellow juice,
Or breaking a compartment of the fruit,
Remove that one to which the steel went home.
This I dissect; but test it as I may,
Fail to discover anything malign.

Not satisfied, I get my microscope,
Which my professor said was made by gnomes,
And not of diamond, but something more,
And that enchanted by a wizard's spell.
Over each separated piece of pulp
I place the sharp and subtile magnifier,
And there, on one to which the steel has passed,
I see a Shape clinging with vicious fear.

Its flabby wings are webbed and reek with slime.
Its fierce eyes glare with green malevolence.
Its face has something of the human shape,
The under jaw too large and bearded long.

The cheeks and forehead carry putrid sores,
As do its taloned heavy arms and legs,
The prickly body and the snake-like tail.
It looks to me like Pain personified.

It may be that this hideous grim face
Is like the idol Krishna's, for they say
That, smitten with the cholera, depart
From its low feasts, the Hindoo devotees.
So foul an atom of bacteria,
Those harpy-vampires infinitesimal,
Once in the human blood, for which it seeks,
Would so immeasurably propagate,
And with its morbid increase, so obstruct
The vital current's red activity,
As to compel the dissolution feared.

I have the curious feeling as I gaze,
Through the strong microscope, on this vile Shape,
That it the *genie* Danhasch is, in fact,
Here shrunken to invisibility,
Or to the unaided sense of human sight.

"The genii, who could at will enlarge
Their pliant bodies to gigantic shapes,"
So says an ancient, necromantic book,
"Did quite as easily diminish them
To atoms far too small for eyes to see,
And thus, at any time, could disappear,
Nor needed help of *schámir*, stone or worm."
Some say that Danhasch gave to Solomon
The *schámir* that he built the Temple with.
Against him and his God, Danhasch rebelled,
And did no good deed when not forced to it
By his most abject terror of God's power.
Perhaps to me too, he has now been sent,
Adversely to his nature and desires,
Somehow to be an instrument for good.

I watch this one cell of bacteria:
The body oozes with a loathsome dew;
The head is red, as if sucked full of blood;
But all the rest, the tail and squatty legs,
The serrate back and lank, satanic wings,
Are green, like those base eyes of jealousy

That look to see a covert murder done.
I find the finest needle in the house,
And press the point down on the slimy hide.
The blunt edge crushes, does not pierce the Shape,
And brings the struggle that I gloat to see.
The talons grip and work to get away.
A barbed tongue and twin fangs drool from the mouth.
The eyes stick out, and glare with wretched hate
Until they fix at last in stony calm.

¶ Not all suspicions are unwarranted,
Nor do they "fly by twilight" at all times;
For some of them may lead up to the truth,
And few do harm if they concern ourselves,
And by ourselves are harbored honestly.
Not such as these are born of ignorance,
Nor of misjudged or false appearances.
The danger in suspicion comes when we,
Too soon, make firm conviction out of it,
Building veracious houses on its sand.
But my suspicion here concerns my Grace,

Who is as dear as I am to myself,
And dearer — a suspicion palpable,
That I almost unconsciously expressed.

The *genie* that I found, that Shape corrupt,
Must be the microbe of some dread disease.
Now that I think of it, I am quite sure
That, in an ordinary microscope,
It would have looked just like a so-called cell
Of cholera *spirillum*, and no less.
Ghianni must have put it in the fruit.
This being so, where has he caught a germ
The naked eye has not the power to see?
I must suspect that, simply for revenge,
He seeks to take the life of my belov'd.
Where poisons of another character
Might meet detection, this one would escape.
And now I have the secret: for some days
Ghianni waits upon a stricken man,
A fellow-member of that same Black Hand,
Or fellow Máfióso, if you will,
Who dies, a victim of the cholera.

Quick, from the vile cadaver, he removes
This baneful aspect and abnormal Shape,
Seen scarce in outline through his weaker lens,
And in the orange hides it cleverly.

¶ I seem to meet again mine enemy,
And now accuse him of the fiendish deed
That he had planned, and whose most dire result,
I, being warned, averted and annulled.
And I demand of him that he return,
At once, to wife and children over sea,
And never cross again my angry path.
If he should stay and brave his just deserts,
He shall but wait to meet his anxious wife,
For I have written to her where he is.
At this he pales, as if he heard his doom —
Says that I could not know his wife's address,
Because he has no wife, and I am false.
I turn away and leave him where he stands,
A living statue of astonishment.

¶ I know that I shall fall ill suddenly,
And in some way by dark Ghianni's hand;

But how, I know not, nor can I conceive.
I wonder why it has been kept from me.
Perhaps it is not meant that I should know.
I seem to lie asleep upon my bed,
And Grace sits near and watches my pale face.
The village doctor makes his morning call,
And takes my listless hand to feel the pulse.
There is no pulse! His hand goes to the heart.
The heart has ceased to beat, and all is still.
The hand the doctor held drops down like lead.
A looking-glass receives no slightest mist,
Laid on the immovable and icy lips.
My eyes are set, and at the ceiling stare.
Grace, seated at my bedside, holds me close,
Kissing with blinding tears my sallow cheeks,
Calling my name, and crying, "Oh, come back!
Come back to me! You must not leave me,
dear!"
Thinking me dead, they tightly close my eyes,
Arrange the face-cloth over my white face,
And go with silent tread about the room.
They do not know that I am in a trance.

I hear each whisper uttered, and the sobs
That heave the desolate bosom that I love.

All is so dark since they have shut my eyes!
It was my aunt who did it, thinking it
Obituary custom long approved;
And still it was a cruel thing to do,
To bar out recognition in the light,
And the sweet pathos of belov'd wet eyes
Bent over me with dear solicitude.
I try, but not a muscle can I move,
Nor utter any word of my dismay.
The whilom guiding mind has lost control
Of the numb body's stopped machinery.

I query whether they will bury me,
Thinking me dead? To waken in the grave
And hear a wagon rumbling overhead,
Or a chance footstep passing by the spot,
And then cry out and never get reply,
But hark the footstep vanishing away,
Or the dull rumble lessen till it cease,

And know the cold earth smothers up all cries,
And is above, beneath, and round me close,
Were hard to bear: to listen long in vain,
For chance or other succor near, and feel
Pent suffocation clutching at the throat;
To shriek and struggle in the narrow place,
Alone with fiend-like darkness and wild fear,
And tear my growing hair out by the roots,
Were agony of hell; but over-matched
By vivisection's horrors oftentimes.

Listen! It now is midnight, for the hour
Is striking slowly in the village spire.
The black monk, Night, is telling off his beads.
Dear Grace is near, now to my bedside comes,
Devoutly kneels, puts up her clasped white hands
To Him whose willing ear is every where,
And prays aloud with wistful fervency:

"O Father of Mercies, still be merciful,
And take me from the gulf of this despair!
I can not think nor feel my love is dead.

If he still live, and now be in a trance,
Give me some sign, that I may know the truth!"

I slowly raise my hand and let it fall.

Grace springs up, all delight, withdraws the cloth,
Kisses my lips, embraces me with tears
And then almost with laughter — overjoyed.
I try, but fail to raise my hand again.
The trance still lasts; my eyes will not unclose;
My lips refuse the functions of their place.

Then enters Jean la Mont, who talks with Grace;—
Tells her she only dreamed about my hand;
It was impossible I lifted it;
That on the morrow I should be laid out,
And they would have the funeral next day.
But Grace is firmer than the brookside rock;
She will not hear his talk of obsequies,
And has her way in having them put off.

¶ In all *asphyxia*, or seeming death,
The only vestige of vitality

Is what the sufferer may think or dream;
And if the dream be supernatural,
It is the same to him as any fact
In his experience called natural.
No man can be so close to death as that
And not believe that what he saw was true.
How do we know that anything exists,
Except as we perceive it in the mind?
In the noëtic is the gist of life.
I had a dream that was within a dream,
And both the dreams were stark realities,
In their impressions and appearances.

THE DREAM WITHIN THE DREAM

I saw a choir of angels in their flight;
Their robes were blue and long, their wings like
gold,
Their faces radiantly beautiful
With heavenly thoughts and never-fading youth.
Against their shoulders laid were harps of fire,
Whose strings they touched and to the rapture
sang.
The flight approached as if it lived in air.
In unison were moved the rhythmic wings,
Or wide-outspread to glide insensibly.
The song I heard them singing as they came,
I, in my feelings only, understood;
But it so lifted me with joy divine,
That I, to meet the angels, straightway rose.

The language of their song was that of tone,
And voiced emotions all too deep for words.
For the angelic insight is so great

That, at a glance, it lovingly beholds
The thoughts and feelings in another's breast.
And so the angels have no need of speech,
But rather use the charms of melody,
For the expression of their sympathies
And for each interchange of love and joy.
Yet well they know to speak to every heart
In its own language and dear mother-tongue.

(In these, my plodding verses, if so be
I say, "he said," or "answered," or the like,
I shall not always mean the words were used,
But that their sense, or substance, was conveyed.)

As buoyantly I rose upon the air,
Untrammeled by the changeful, woven dust,
In which I had been consciously enmeshed
For more than six and twenty youthful years,
I saw an angel from the choir depart,
And come to meet me with a swift descent;
And as he came, with shining wings outspread,
I saw that he was vaster than I thought,

And that his wings, if seen against the sky,
Above its line along the eastern rim,
Like splendid shafts of morning would appear.

With pleased surprise I noticed that myself
Had grown much larger in the rarer air,
Expanding most to give the senses room.
I found I now could see, hear, smell, and taste,
And feel, in greater measure than before.
Each sense, intensified, had wider scope
Than in the body, where it is constrained
And to a narrow compass set and gauged,
Beyond whose round it is of none effect.

And I had other senses delicate,
Affording draughts of bliss ineffable.
Hints of remote and more exalted powers,
That had been given me when on the earth,
My new sensations startlingly recalled.
I felt a fresh uplift and ownership,
Too strange as yet to be of full avail,
But like the dawning of a vaster day.

Not he, the widow's son, who, on his bier,
Was carried out at Naïn's city gate,
And heard from Jesus' lips the firm "Arise!"
Nor he who, in the cave that was his tomb,
Obeyed the mandate, "Lazarus, come forth!"
Nor yet Jaïrus' daughter, nor the lad
Whom rapt Elijah brought again to life,
Has left one word to tell of what was seen
While separated from the house of flesh.
And it is well; for had the half been told,
Yes, even less, it had not been believed.

The angel, who approached on far-spread wings,
Smiled as he came, his graceful arms outstretched.
In them he caught me up most tenderly,
And carried me as if I were a child.
His mighty harp was fluttering, tho' at rest,
With homing, dove-like wings of sacred flame;
And our velocity was so intense,
It made æolian music in the strings.
A comet had not been of swifter flight,
And yet, of motion I was scarce aware;

For tho' it may seem paradoxical,
The swiftest motion is most perfect rest.
The earth turns round a thousand miles an hour,
And all so peacefully that wise mankind
For ages thought it never moved at all.

We now had joined the others of the choir,
And so pursued with them one steady course.
At times they sang, at times sped silently.
When they were hushed, my angel often spoke,
But in such musical, spontaneous phrase,
That I despair of reproducing more,
In my unweeded, daily, common speech,
Than bald, scant meanings of his utterance.

I was upborne on wings with high delight,
And every sense I had, fulfilled of joy.
Sight was enchanted with the glorious day
Made by the pinions in their onward sweep.
I had been blinded, had I seen with eyes.
I smelt the most delicious fragrances,
As if the roses of a thousand years

Were pouring forth their odors all at once.
My hearing listened to ecstatic strains;
My taste was gratified with heavenly food;
And touch could have no fonder feel of joy,
Than that prolonged in being starward borne
Upon a loving angel's peaceful breast.

Most grateful was the pure humility,
As redolent as beds of violets,
Which these bright angels one another showed.
Each dignified, but modest, tacitly
Preferred another always to himself,
Gave place with deference, and in no form,
In that vast, splendid, interstellar sweep,
Assumed the least superiority.

There was a pæan with acclaim of thanks,
When my good angel to the choir returned,
Of whom there must have been a century.
And all of them, at some time on the way,
Caressed and, with affectionate glad looks,
Gave me their benedictions merciful.

Their soft hands thrilled me through, and I could see
That now my sublimated senses wore
A glorified white garment spiritual,
Unlike the earthly — incorporeal.

When first he took me up in his strong arms,
My angel told me that I need not fear,
For he might bring me safely back again;
Or he might not; it would be as God willed.
In either case, I had no need to fear,
For it was well with me, whichever side
The line of being the result might fall.
He had been traveling from west to east,
And, going swifter than the bulky earth,
Had seen my disembodied spirit poised,
Irresolute and immaterial,
In the lark's privacy of morning sky;
And feeling that weird impulse from without,
Which is the unaccountable command
That bends all wills before it as thin reeds,
And having often wished that he might gain

The love of an immortal human soul,
Had left the choir and gladly flown to me,
Obedient to the impulse and the wish.

He told me that he once had met in heaven
My mother and the mother of my Grace,
And said that of my coming they would know,
As would my father, and have joy of it.
Perhaps the three would meet me at The Gate.

I answered that my cup of bliss was full,
Or would be then, if Grace were at my side,
And that my longing, at each beat of wings,
More eager grew, to see her once again.
"Then turn your gaze within, and think of her,
And you clairvoyantly will have your wish,"
He said; and as I did so, I beheld
My loved one by a window in the room
In which my empty house of clay was laid,
Seated and reading in the Book of God,
The psalmist's "Lift up your heads, O ye gates!
Be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors!"

Then upward to my angel's radiant face,
I changed my gaze, and murmured, "It is true,
I may behold her always in my heart,
In every act and movement bodily,
Or in my memory's locket keep her face;
But this does not my longing satisfy.
It is her actual presence that I want,
The loving glances of the soulful eyes,
The clasp of arms, the cling of lips to lips."

My angel smiled, and thus he answered me:
"To give to every creature God has made,
Fulfillment absolute and to the brim,
Of natural aspirations and desires,
For which he is adapted and prepared,
Is one great purpose of the universe.
And do not doubt that, if you set your prayers
In the sweet sorrow of that minor key,
Wherewith deep longing makes compassion strong,
And fervently beseech of God your wish,
It will be granted when its day has come."

He spoke and pressed me closer to his breast,
As if his inmost sympathy were mine;
While I, with one expression of my love,
Wreathed his fair neck, and, with another, felt
The purity of his celestial lips.
And then I asked him whether he to me
Would tell his name, to wear it in my thoughts
Forever, like a talisman, or charm.
"Some five millenniums ago," he said,
"I was a dweller on a far-off world
Revolving round the star that came and went
In constellated Cassiopéan space;
And there my mother gave a name to me,"—
He told it at low breath,—"Harbon'ima;
And if you learn to use it properly,
You will perceive it is a talisman."

So spoke Harbonima, the Glorious;
And as we were approaching now The Gate
And that delectable, most central Star,
Round which the whole creation grandly moves,
And saw it brighten whitely and enlarge,

I asked him would he tell me of the flight,
And what had been its mission and to whom.

Then all the other angels, with swift hands
In lambent concert, woke the living strings,
So that we swam in music sweet and low,
A dreamy, softly-undulating sea,
Above which flew the bird of one clear voice,
With many octaves jubilantly winged,
The voice of him upon whose breast I lay.
He sang at gaze upon the Star of God,
Where ONE in visible glory manifest,
Ineffable Perfection Absolute,
Omnipotent, all-knowing Author of,
And sole Fulfiller of infinity,
Arrayed in holiness as in a robe,
Directs the universe and all therein
Forever and forever, and is still
Diffused and omnipresent in His works.
At gaze, sang great Harbonima to me;
And I must put the meaning of his song
In somewhat loose iambic beggar's rags:

"It is God's pleasure always to create
New worlds, new creatures, beauty and delight;
And with this purpose He renews the earth,
And fills it ever with new days and youth,
While to its dead he gives sublimer joys.

"Upon the Galaxy's remotest bourne,
Beyond which there is nothing but Himself,
God, in times past, flung out a mighty star,
A whirling outpost of His light and love,
And wished that every creature born thereon
Might struggle upward, as all creatures should,
Toward that divine Perfection that He is.
But they upon that world were slow to see
His presence and His glory in His works,
And needed some well-versed interpreter,
To set in light His character benign,
Construing, in their tongue, deific words
Writ large in nature, over all of it
Within the bounds of knowledge and beyond.
So we, this choir of harpers, whom at times
The poet David, King of Israel,

Watching his sheep by night, beheld and heard,
And caught his inspiration from our lips,
We harpers, were sent forth to that far world,
To give to it the Messianic Word,
And tell the story of the lowly Christ —
To say that he indeed was Son of God,
And God Himself expressed in human life.

"When to our destination we had come,
The time was night, but night without a star,
Because there is no star beyond that world.
As to the watching shepherds we appeared,
Upon the frosty Galilean hills,
When Christ was born, so now we filled with light
And joyful tidings the incumbent sky.

"Beneath, two tented cities, on a plain,
Stretched out, for leagues away, on either side,
And all the slumberous quiet dreamed of war.
Beholding us, the lonely sentinels
Roused every tent, and called the fighters forth
To see us and to hear our news supreme.

There is more faith in that world than in yours,
For when we broke into our choric psalm,
Voicing the holy passion and the cross,
All reverently knelt and worshiped Him.
They cast away their deadly implements,
And said that never, in that world, again,
Should any battle shame the face of Christ.

"For many days we stayed and taught the faith,
And put our sacred records on a scroll
Where all might read and doubt not what they
read.
Then hitherward we flew on lilting wings,
And yonder is the City of our God!"

He ceased, and now, so dazzling was the glare,
My sense of sight was nearly overcome.
Beneath us flashed a glassy, wide blue sea;
Before us shone a blinding effluence.

The choir with throat and string took up a theme
Symphonic, universal, and by far
Surpassing anything I yet had heard.

Their praise and adoration heaped, with gems
Of thought and melody, the name of God;
And other choirs, seen in the distant sky,
Joined grandly in the spheric vast refrain.
So, round the heavenly city, all bright space
Chimed resonantly and sonorously,
With sun-wide splendors of the Light divine,
With beauty, perfume, and the blend of harps,
In dulcet diapason, staying up
Exultant voices masterfully great.

As I became accustomed to the light,
I saw the City of Jewels where it stood.
It covered nearly half the Central Star;
And even as he, on Patmos isled, beheld
Its visionary and descending form,
So I beheld it in reality,
Firm set upon its base and all unmoved.
The inner calm of it struck home to me,
No less than its consummate loveliness.

I saw its walls compact of precious stones:
The first foundation was of jasper built;

Of sapphire was the second; next, and third,
Waxen chalcedony; fourth, emerald;
Fifth, sardonyx; sixth, sardius; the seventh
Of chrysolite; eighth, beryl; topaz, ninth;
Tenth, chrysoprase; a jacinth, the eleventh;
And twelfth, and at the top, an amethyst.
Each number with its jewel corresponds,
And has a faithful meaning to the wise.
I saw the Holy City stand four square,
And facing to the north, south, east and west,
Three gates of solid pearl upon each side.
The street is of pure gold and like clear glass,
And many palms extend their healing fronds
Within the city and outside the walls.
Amidst that chiefest street, between its palms,
A river of living water brightly flows,
And is the river of Immortal Life.

No night is there, nor ever need of lamp.
The chilly snow or sleet there never falls,
Nor wan clouds brood, or tempests blow or flash;
But all is light and joy and love and peace.

And now descended to that far, bright shore,
Unwearied by their swift and spacious flight,
The choir of angels with whom I had come.
They seemed to glide along, not walk, the ground,
Or solid under us, of substance strange,
But like syringa blossoms in its scent;
They said it was of vast fertility.
And moving inland further over it,
With folded wings, they stood before The Gate,
Which is the midmost on the eastern side.
I saw it was indeed of one great pearl,
But overlaid with mystical device,
Translucent and transcendent artistry,
To represent the Christ twelve crucial times,
Upon his way to Golgotha and death.

The Gate was high and narrow, and so hung
That, at the angel warder's slightest touch,
It spurned the threshold and was lifted up.
It thus discovered, waiting close within,
Three lovely spirits whom at once I knew,
My father and my mother and, near by,

The fair and gentle mother of my Grace,
All robed in white and grateful to my gaze,
Which had been fevered with expectancy.
They each embraced me with delight serene,
That seemed like some such "Highness," on a
throne,
And sparkled with each movement, head to foot.
Then to a house that stood outside The Gate,
They led me with endearments manifold.

Most like a Roman villa it appeared,
Built round an ample court, the peristyle
In fluted porphyry forest-lanes, of green
Or red or purple, all Corinthian.
Thick, velvet veils of colors shot with gold
Between the columns hung, drawn mostly back,
And swept the glossy surface of the floor
Mosaically strewn with palms and flowers.
Amidst the court a laughing fountain danced
In spangled drapery and floating hair,
And flung its arms, and clicked its castanets
Of pearl on pearl, in witching attitudes.

The noble frescoes are the kind of art
That satisfies and does not show itself,
And knows itself too well to think of self,
But only of perfection in its work,
Toward which it passionately perseveres,
Nor nears its aim till gone beyond itself.
Here Raphael has finely reproduced
The haunting beauty of the face of her,
The deifier of maternity.
Beyond the doorway and behind the fount,
Before a variegated curtain drawn
Between two pillars of the colonnade,
A curving exedra, or high-backed bench,
Out of a solid block of onyx hewn,
Invited mutely to symposium.

All this I, at a sweeping glance, beheld
On entering The House of Them that Wait.
Within the doorway we were gladly met
By the supernal keeper robed in white,
Who, fair amazingly to look upon,
To us gave welcome till we felt its glow.

He led us round the lofty peristyle,
Explaining mural pictures here and there,
About which I was curious and inquired.
We moved with happy thoughts and loving looks,
In fond, familiar converse, side by side.
My mother told me that she always knew
What I was doing, and my inmost thoughts,
And through my conscience, often spoke to me,
Giving me steadfast counsel and advice;
And when she might not speak, my father did.
Sometimes they gave suggestions in my sleep,
That in the wakeful morning lay, cast forth
By the mysterious tides of the unseen,
Upon the carking shores of consciousness.
Death did not alienate parental love
Until its object, living on the earth,
Was deaf to what it whispered to the soul.
Parental love and God's love are akin.
She said this, and my father echoed it,
And added, in his manner as of old,
That, through their influence, was gained for me
The special privilege I now received.

Then up a magic staircase, wide and high,
Palatial and magnificent, we passed,
And entered many of the rooms above,
Where certain confidently pious souls,
Who were impatient of another's sins,
And for the erring oft had felt disdain,
Were kept in waiting — some had waited long.

Thence to the roof we went, and saw the wall,
That rose above us to a dizzy height,
Encompassing the city like God's love.
Set in the middle course along the wall,
And six extending either side The Gate,
A row of corbeled oriel windows perched,
Polygonal, and topped with mural crowns
In ormolu, of which the windows were,
Except the casement glass, which took the light
And passed it to the vaulted room within.

Then round the roof we moved, itself of glass,
And stood along the heavy parapet
Upon the other side, where we beheld

Two beaming angels on wide, brilliant wings,
Approaching rapidly the pearly Gate.
One on his bosom bore a crimson rose,
The other an easter-lily's fragrant snow.
Both flowers were carried lightly by their stems.

Then I inquired of him whose guests we were,
"Where do the angels find such lovely flowers?
Where do they grow so large and vividly?"
"They are not flowers, but souls"; he answered me,
"For they who come here, choose the fairest forms;
And souls may take on any form they will.
I chose the human, with two golden wings,
Because that seemed most beautiful of all. . . .

"Tell me," he added, "what the wish is for,
That brought you hither to this sacred Gate?"
"For further light in mysteries divine —
To enter at The Gate and dwell within,"
I said, and thought of Grace, and longed for her;

But knew that she would come, or soon, or late,
And ask for me and seek me till she found.
The keeper of the house replied that I
"Must wait until the Master be informed
Of my desire, and his response returned."

Thereat up-spoke the mother of my love:
"How is it that you now appear to wish
To stay away from her, my daughter Grace,
Who loves you with imperishable love?
If I another loved as you love Grace,
And it were given me to have my way,
I would go back to him from heaven's Gate.
With heavy heart she waits for your return.
There is no quiet for the lonely hope
That keeps its vigil by your silent dust.
Her prayers are all too pitiful to hear,
And have come up to Him, the Merciful.
But your half-meant request shall be announced,
And if I may, I will return to you
His fiat and unchangeable reply."

We then descended to the peristyle,
And lingered at the fountain's onyx bench,
Discoursing chiefly of the seraphim,
Who are, like every other and all truth,
Revered, self-luminous, inviolable;
And each, God's six-winged messenger, can fly
As swift as love and thought from star to star.

I do not know how long it was that they,
My kinsfolk, tarried with me in that house;
But I went with them to the very Gate,
And reaching, touched its pearl, I was so near,
And parted with them there, who were so true,
Thankful that I had seen them, talked with them,
And had the strong assurance of their love.

Nor do I now recall the length of time,
If any time can be at heaven's Gate,
That passed before I heard a singing voice.
I had gone up and on the housetop stood,
And as I gazed upon the glassy sea,
The magic music rose, superbly sweet,

And all the sweeter for its tender notes
Of lingering and half-expressed regret.

I saw an oriel window in the wall
Above the house, with casements open flung,
And there the three whom I have lost on earth
And love in heaven; and Grace's mother sang,
And father and mother joined in the refrain:

"Why tarry here? You can not now come in.
It is too soon. Not yet this rest you win.
On distant shores of midnight and of noon,
You must begin anew life's gracious boon.
Your lamp will burn for years, from moon to moon.
Return, return! Why tarry here?

"Why tarry here? You may not longer stay.
An angel flies to bear you all the way.
His splendid wings light up the starry skies
Like shining day, and wait their new emprise.
Vain longings spurn, for Heaven your wish denies!
Return, return! Why tarry here?

"Why tarry here? Is not the whole earth fair?
God made it too, and hung it in the air;
And all His works are good, and just, and true,
Beyond compare. On earth love longs for you.
To weep and yearn, is all her heart can do.
Return, return! Why tarry here?"

The last word of the song was scarcely sung
When, at my side, Harbonima appeared.
The oriel and I exchanged farewells.
He took me in his arms, outspread his wings,
And swept forth swiftly into empty space.

Of many things he told me on the way,
Irrelevant here, and scarce to be believed
By minds so wedded to the earth's routine,
So cramped and dull, they mock at everything
Beyond what their five senses apprehend.
And it is true, the mind can not conceive,
Or rarely, of a thing it has not seen.
So I have used the figures of the known
To represent, however faultily,

The things beyond the narrow little round
In which our senses move and are confined.

The angel told me that my house of flesh
Was "swept and garnished," and tho' out of it
No evil spirit had departed ever,
Because none ever entered into it,
The soul, who had departed, would return
And be a nobler spirit than before.

For one brief hour, upon the planet Mars,
We stopped and gave a message long withheld;
Then started forth, and saw the earth at night
Far sparkling in its round of time and space.
It, every moment, grew upon our sight,
Enlarging rapidly, till it appeared
A giant moon, electric, wonderful.
And soon we saw its continents and seas,
Its snow-capped poles; and nearer still, it looked
One solid sapphire filling half the sky.
In admiration of it, I was lost.

"How beautiful it is!" the angel cried;
"And He, the Source of beauty and of truth,
Created it, and saw that it was good.
I see the drift and purpose of the years,
The evolution of a higher type
Than any race of beings now on earth.
The will, which is the magnet of the mind,
And not to any special species bound,
Shall yet attract to it diviner powers,
And man himself be something more than man.
Old civilizations pass, the new come on.
The husks fall off, and what is best survives."

With his prophetic lips he kissed me thrice;
My boon, fraternal spirit kissed my lips,
And saying that he would remember me,
Would hold me in his heart as in his arms,
He pressed me warmly to his loving breast,
And parted from me in the upper air.

A brief delight of wilding melody,
Delicious flights in music's fairylands,

Down fluttered with the words of his farewell: —
"Good-bye, good-bye! True love is life and joy.
Farewell, farewell, until we meet again!
Until we meet again, farewell, good-bye!"

I watched him till his brightness seemed a star
Far twinkling in the firmamental depths;
Then, on the distant mountain-tops, beheld
The first red petals of the morn unfold.

¶ Tho' much of what I saw is left untold,
So ends my vision on the brookside rock.
It teased me to be written, night and day.
It would not give me either peace or rest
Until the final line was set in ink.

And when I, thus enforced, took up the work,
Conceits and fitting phrases were supplied.
Sometimes whole verses, ready for their place
And in due order, waited in my mind
Until their turn should come to be of use.

As a stone-mason, laying up a wall,
Has the materials all brought to him,
And has no more to do than sensibly
To trowel up the mortar, spread it out,
And bed the stones, each in its mural home,
Even so was I in my devoted work.

This wordy likenêss of the future's face, —
The face that seems so surely turned away,
But here reverted openly, — is done.
And I will seal it up and put it by,
Until the time for its fulfillment slips
Into the vaulted vista of the past.

THE RECOVERY

I long have lain perforce upon my back;
Now I will turn and lie upon my side.
Days came and went, and half the country round
Have entered here and looked upon my face.
And some have told that I was surely dead,
And that I was not buried was a shame;
While others took with Grace the firmer ground
That, while a chance of life was left for me,
My body should be kept from burial.
I think the doctor sided too with Grace,
As did my kindly, good old maiden aunt.

I must have been unconscious for six days;
At least, it seems so; for the calendar,
Whose two numeric eyes so blindly stare,
Shows it is six days later than the date
That I had counted up to, in my mind.
What has become of those six missing days?

They are entirely blotted out, and gone
Into the realms of Dis and ancient night.

How thin and weak I am! But it is good
To move once more and see the light of day
And these familiar things about the room.

It must be morning; but the house is still.
I do not hear my busy aunt about.
The paint-fast slats, reversed in yonder blind,
Let in more light than all the others do.
Perhaps I might get up; I think I might,
And open all the blinds; the light is good.

It was not long ago I tried to speak,
And tried to take the face-cloth from my face,
And could not, tho' I knew I was alive.
I was as conscious then as I am now.

It might be well for me to try my voice:
"O Aunt! come here! It must be time to rise!"
In an adjoining room there was a stir,

And Grace rushed in, embraced me, kissed my
lips,
And looking upward, cried, "O God, my God!
With all my heart and soul and mind and strength,
For this I thank Thee! Hallow'd be Thy name!"

"And you," I said, "not only saved my life,
But you have saved me from a dreadful death,
The death by suffocation in the grave.
Henceforth my life is yours, belongs to you,
And I will live for you while life shall last,
And be your husband, ardent lover, friend,
And truly faithful servant, if I may."

BONER

WINSTON–SALEM, MCMIV

Like Keats, while wasting with the slow disease
That never loses hope, at times his soul
Would try its wings and fly where sunset seas
Round fairy headlands rhythmically roll.
There, where the clear, white light of truth has
birth,
The light he loved, he met Poe's spirit free
And knew it well: with good work done on earth
The mind makes strong its own identity.
Thus went and came, while tethered to his clay,
Our poet's soul; but now he bides afar
And will return not; for his wings display,
Where truth and joy and beauty ever are,
Beyond the sunset and the dying day,
Beyond the moonrise and the evening star.

EPIGÉNEA

THE WATCHER INQUIRES

Rhidz, so an old Arabian legend runs,
Was born before the early gray of time,
And of "the watchers and the holy ones,"
Was set, at earth's primeval ooze and slime,
To note the slow, great geologic play,
Till gneiss and schist in chaos pass away.

And somewhere in his tireless pilgrimage,
He came upon a city very old
And populous, wherein he met a sage;
And Rhidz, to question him, at once made bold:
"Wisdom and knowledge in your face appear.
How long since this great town was founded here?"

Chagrin was in the placid answer glassed:
"Gray knowledge halts at what you wish to know.
Lost in the silent darkness of the past,
Nor mark nor memory remains to show

Our city's age. If truth be in a myth,
Sea-monsters here men have contended with."

After long centuries, Rhidz came again
To the same place, the widespread city's site,
And found no vestige of that haunt of men;
Streets, temples, palaces, had vanished quite.
And gathering herbs, where once the mart had
been,
Startled, looked up a beldam gaunt and thin.

Of her demanded Rhidz how long the town
Had been destroyed, and by what stroke, or shock.
"In sooth," she answered with a moment's frown,
"You ask a question strange; this ground, or rock,
Has never been and never more may be,
In aught, scarce different from what you see."

"But was there not," said Rhidz, "in former times,
A high-walled city here, with fanes like snow,
And Commerce babbling tongues of foreign
climes?"

"Never," replied the woman, "that we know,
Has any city stood upon this spot;
Of such our ancestors have spoken not."

After the lapse of other centuries,
Calm Rhidz, in his gray dignity of years,
Again returns and, wide before him, sees
The incoming ocean; naught save that appears,
And white-gulled solitude. Where was before
Firm ground, the maned wave leaps, to plunge ashore.

Below, a little group of fishermen
Were busy with their nets, and Rhidz inquired
Of them, how long ago it was, and when,
The sea came up, and all that land attired
In its wet robe of ermine and velvet blue?
They stared and shook their heads; no soul there knew.

Fishers of men, not these; for with a sneer,
One said, "What dullard thing is this you ask,
Who look to be a wizard or a seer?

Good sense is slow to interrupt a task;
But just an alms from thrift let folly win:
What now it is, this land has always been!"

Ages have intervened, and Rhidz once more
Comes back to the same place, and finds the sea
Withdrawn still farther than it was of yore,
And hidden by hills of bald antiquity.
The ground is higher, and is cut in two
By a deep river idling brightly through.

Fondled by loving Cultivation, all
Luxuriant the lands; they laugh aloud
In song of bird, or dash of waterfall,
And blush in roses, whose dear heads are bowed
With dewy memories, or reverence,
And breathe forth prayers of joy-bewitching scents.

There was a gardener near, who pruned a vine,
And Rhidz his phrase to him forthwith addressed:
"How long since, from this inland floral shrine,
The sea retired and left the land so blest?"

The gardener smiled: "The sea! Not so, I wis;
This land was never other than it is."

Lastly, and after equal lapse of time,
Rhidz visited again the garden-spot,
And now beheld a city all sublime
In marble massiveness. It was a jot
Superior to the city earlier,
Because, in this one, certain great men were.

And quite as flourishing and populous
The newer city was; and when Rhidz fain
Had settled in his mind how long it thus
Had been a city, curious to gain
Their story of its origin, askance
They looked at him, the learn'd inhabitants.

"How long the city has existed here,
We do not know," they told him, "and our sires
Upon the question were no whit more clear,
Or wiser, than ourselves. The town aspires
To all wherein it may be great and free;
Its birth is lost in dim antiquity."

SCHILLER IN AMERICA

CHICAGO, MCMV

SCHILLER, a heavenly light, gleam-winged and pure,
Into the human heart sends down his beam.
In him the eternal ideal world is sure,
And what is called reality, a dream.
Only the spiritual may long endure:
Still lives the too ambitious *Wallenstein;*
Still rings and swings the great *Song of the Bell,*
And 'gainst oppression pleads, with thought divine,
All vehement for freedom, *William Tell.*
Great poets lift the torch of liberty
And carry forward the red tongue of flame;
And Schiller's countrymen, who cross the sea
And in America advance his fame,
Light the Republic to futurity!

PASCUAL VIVAS

TENTH CENTURY

In the dim early dawn of that mystical day,
To the chapel I rode in the train of the Count,
Quite the least in that cavalier council of zeal.
When the first Mass was said, they all rose from their knees,
And their bright armor clanked as they strode to the door.

Now the strife had begun in the vale at the ford,
But I knew it not then, tho' I thought it might be,
And they spurred to the front while I wavered forlorn.
For I fain had gone forth to the field with the rest,
But my vow kept me back; I had made it to God:
Having entered a church, I would not thence depart,
But remain till all Masses were said for the day.

This the vow I had sworn, hard beset by the foe,
And the Lord, of His grace, made me way midst
their swords.

So I stayed in the chapel, where Mass followed
Mass,
Tho' I feared in my soul that mine oath was my
shame.
But I prayed: "Holy One, keep my honor un-
dimmed
While I hold my vow! It is simple to say
That a man, if he cling to a matter in hand,
Must forego other things that he gladly would
do.
Do those other things Thou, for all men doing
right;
Do such wonders, dear Lord, for the absent and
just,
That no damage shall come of a dutiful deed,
And no loss ever wait on devotion to Thee!"
Thus I prayed on my knees, head to foot clad in
steel,

And my quick Gothic blood, that upflared for the
fight,
Smouldered red. But my squire held my steed at
the door,
And he blushed when the Count and his knights,
thronging out,
Sprang to horse, gathered rein; for he saw that
I stayed.

Now the chapel stood high on a hill, looking down
On the valley below and the stream through its
midst,
And my squire, from the height, saw the clash at
the ford,
Where the firm Christian host met the turban'd
swart Moors,
And he heard the blown clangor of trumpets, and all
The far tumult of battle that rose from the vale.
And my steed pricked his ears, snuffed the air,
pawed the ground —
Showed his wish to be off and among the armed
men.

Having fancied weak fear had begotten delay,
Full of scorn was my squire that I tarried within.
Shame on him for a fool, to misjudge what I did,
In the glare of a past that he knew had been brave.
But he fumed when the Masses were finally closed,
And he saw Moorish troops far dispersed in retreat,
And below, riding up from the vale, Christian knights,
And could hear their proud shouts for the victory won.

When he brought me the news I was glad and ashamed,
Being troubled in mind with one uppermost thought,
Which I gloomily phrased: "Surely I am now held
As a cowardly knight who has hidden himself
On a perilous day." So I would not go forth,
And my cloud flashed with fear of an angry Count's face.

Soon came in cavaliers like myself, comrades all,
And I saw I was mocked; for they said they were sent
By the Count, who would thank me in person at once.
They led on, and I rode all cast down by their scorn;
For my valor they praised and the blows it had dealt,
And they said that to me and the might of my arm
Was the victory due. Thus they thrust, as I deemed,
With the cold, gleamy steel of ironic rebuke.

So I came to the Count with confusion of face
And reluctantly bowed, but I heard my heart throb
Like the beating of hoofs close beside in pursuit.
Yet before I could speak, he had grasped both my hands,
Gave me kiss and embrace with his thanks — called me great —

Said that Spain owed me more than mere guerdon
of words,
And with other such sons, she would drive out the
Moor.

I grew hot; felt their eyes; was astonished and
dumb,
With my hand on my sword, and a suffocate
sense
As if desolate Grief, crouching close to her font,
Would have strangled me there for the wounds I
endured.

But at last, with pent wrath, I burst out, "Tell
me more
That I did on the field! Spare me not, and mock
on!"

Then the Count: "Mock thee, sir! Did not I see
thy deeds?
Didst thou not first appear in the thick of the
fight,

Slay the Moors right and left in wide swaths, seem
thyself
Like a glittering scythe in the Saracen grass?
Didst thou not put to flight a whole squadron of
Moors?
Didst thou not cut thy way to the enemy's
flag,
Kill the man who upbore the gay, insolent silk,
And ride back to our ranks with the standard in
hand?
When the battle was won, and that chiefly by
thee,
Did I not see thee dash up the chapel-crowned
hill?
By my troth, be it far from me ever to mock
At a man of such magical prowess as thine."

Now my manhood found speech and I uttered the
truth,
How I lingered in chapel and held to my vow
While the fiery-hour'd struggle emblazoned the
day;

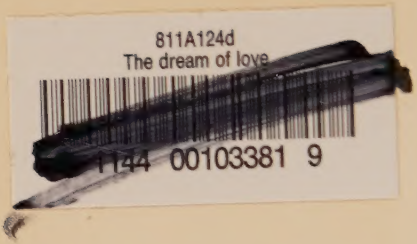
For I scorned to be false and take honor not
mine.

But they all wondered much, and they said that a
knight
Like myself every whit, to my manner and voice,
Took my place in the field and did all that was
told.
And they swore by the Rood that, if I were away,
On my knees to the Host at each several Mass,
I was also with them. And I too, wondered
much.

But that night through the doors of my sleep came
a dream,
And the Angel of Death, in the gray of the dawn,
Stood before me and said, "It was I took thy place
In the battle; assumed all thine arms, thy device,
Ay, thyself and thy steed, and my deeds were
thine own.
But if thou to the field hadst gone forth all for-
sworn,

Having broken thine oath, thou that hour hadst
been slain
And thy soul plunged and lost in the nethermost
woe.
Worthy soldier art thou of the life-giving Cross,
For thy will is of faith that is stronger than I,
And two victories thou hast intrepidly won!"

So the angel passed by, and I knew it was day.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